

U.S. House and Senate Notification
Friday, June 4, 2010

To: Congressional Health Staff

From: Amy Hall
Director, Office of Legislation
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Re: Medicare Assistance with Drug Costs for Low Income Beneficiaries

Please click on the following link https://www.cms.gov/apps/media/press_releases.asp for the CMS English and Spanish press releases describing eligibility criteria for Extra Help, the Low Income Subsidy that helps low income beneficiaries pay their Part D drug premiums, deductibles and copayments. The release highlights the eligibility changes taking effect this year as a result of the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 that make it easier for low income beneficiaries to qualify for Extra Help. The release is part of CMS' annual campaign to publicize Extra Help and increase enrollment in the program.

There is no cost to apply for "Extra Help." Medicare beneficiaries, family members, trusted counselors or caregivers can apply online at www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp or call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY users should call 1-800-325-0778) and ask for the *Application for Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs*.

Medicare beneficiaries can also receive assistance in their local communities from their State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). Local SHIP contact information can be found on the back of the Medicare & You 2010 handbook or online at www.medicare.gov/contacts/staticpages/ships.aspx. All the information you give is confidential.

To learn more about Medicare prescription drug coverage, visit www.medicare.gov, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Please contact the CMS Office of Legislation if you have any questions.